

DRAFT

**MAG Dark Sky Stakeholders Group (DSSG)  
Draft Meeting Notes**

**July 22, 2009**

After Heidi Pahl welcomed the group to their 6<sup>th</sup> DSSG meeting, she introduced Nathan Pryor, MAG Senior Policy Planner. She said Nathan Pryor was invited to today's meeting to give a presentation on MAG's role in the DSSG and explain the MAG committee process. She said that questions from DSSG attendees prompted this presentation.

Before Mr. Pryor's presentation Heidi Pahl provided background. She explained that this background had been provided at the first DSSG meeting, but since there were some new faces she would tell the story again.

Background

Last summer the MAG Executive Director was approached by a member of the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) with a request to make a presentation to all MAG member agencies on the growing outdoor light pollution in our region. The IDA saw MAG as an efficient way to reach many jurisdictions. They offered staff from the astronomy community to help MAG form a stakeholders group and create a model dark sky ordinance.

MAG then had several members of the astronomy community attend the August 2008 Planners Stakeholders Group (PSG) meeting to discuss outdoor light pollution. The PSG is made up of senior planners and planning managers.

In October 2008, Dr. Buell Januzzi, Director of the Kitt Peak Observatory, provided a report to the MAG Management Committee about issues related to outdoor light pollution in Maricopa County. He explained that outdoor light pollution creates a significant waste of electricity and money, and degrades the visibility of our night skies. This affects the world-class observatories located in the state. During the presentation, the counties, municipalities and Indian communities were invited to consider revisiting the adequacy and enforcement of their respective lighting ordinances in an effort to provide quality lighting to improve visibility, save energy, and protect dark skies.

In December 2008, Dr. Januzzi gave the same presentation to the MAG Regional Council. His message was that there is no good reason to waste money and energy. With intelligent planning and design, you put lighting where you need it and don't put it where you don't need it: in other words, in the sky.

In January, 2009, the MAG Management Committee approved convening a Dark Sky Stakeholders Group. A memo was sent to the jurisdictional managers alerting them of the first meeting and encouraging them to send staff.

## DRAFT

The purpose of this Stakeholders Group is to collect information on outdoor light pollution, review best practices in lighting codes, and to develop a model dark sky ordinance. Since March 2009, 6 meetings have been held.

MAG understands that these are difficult financial times for the MAG member agencies. MAG hopes that this Stakeholders Group, assisted by the astronomy community, can identify cost-saving technology that can assist member agencies in the future.

To date, the MAG DSSG has created and facilitated the review of a model code based on best practices and guidelines. Heidi Pahl said she is not certain of the outcome of the DSSG but imagines that MAG will ask the policy committees to direct MAG to forward the model dark sky ordinance to MAG member agencies. At that point, MAG's role would be complete. MAG has no enforcement authority. Each agency can choose what is best for them with regards to the model code.

Nathan Pryor explained MAG's purposes and functions, the MAG committee process and how DSSG fits into MAG. His presentation is available on the MAG web site.

### Next Steps

Heidi Pahl explained that after consensus is reached on the model code, it was suggested that other interested parties be invited to provide input (e.g. developers, Arizona Sign Association, lighting designers, architects, biologists, environmentalists, crime professionals, car dealers, police departments, marketing professionals, etc.) At the June DSSG meeting, representatives from Avondale and Buckeye offered to contact industry experts. DSSG members agreed to discuss next steps at the next meeting.

### Continuation of Discussion of the Draft Pattern Lighting Code (PLC)

Heidi Pahl explained that version 3 of the PLC has been posted to the MAG web site and it includes all changes made by the group.

Comments were received from DSSG members. Chris Luginbuhl of the United States Naval Observatory in Flagstaff agreed to incorporate changes.

Carol Johnson, Phoenix, asked if consideration has been given to Prop 207. Chris Luginbuhl stated that he recommends all jurisdictional attorneys to review the draft PLC.

Referring to Table 4.2, Chris Luginbuhl noted that each agency will be responsible for creating its own lighting zone map to attach to the draft PLC.

Section 6.1F and 7.6 were changed to state, "registered engineer, architect or landscape architect" or "registered professional." Chris Luginbuhl said he would provide an explanation of this change in a guidelines document.

Section 9.1 – Discussion was held on the applicability of leaving this in the draft PLC. Gordon Sheffield, Mesa, suggested it could be removed from the PLC and placed in a city nuisance code.

## DRAFT

Section 11.1A – It was agreed by DSSG that this section should be deleted.

Section 9.4 – This should match section 5.3A.

Section 5.3A – Patty Zaricor, Maricopa County, explained that the County is currently updating its sign ordinance. Discussion was held on how to measure the amount of light coming from a sign. Chris Luginbuhl said that 100 nits is a low value and it is safe for drivers. He said most sign manufacturers are not aware of the term “nits”. To keep the PLC simple, it is best not to use the term.

Section 5.2 – Chris Luginbuhl stated he would supply the white paper from the City of Flagstaff. He said he would change the sign measurement to square foot/sign for off-site signs. It was mentioned that there is a new energy conservation element in general plans and Phoenix, Mesa and other cities are embarking on General Plan updates.

Mike Sills-Trausch, Glendale, asked if pedestrian lights should be added to the PLC. Chris Luginbuhl said that was a good point and he would think about adding text for it. Mr. Sills-Trausch asked if interior light coming through a window should be a point of discussion at a future meeting. The group agreed that it should be discussed in the future.

Each attendee of the DSSG responded to Mike Sills-Trausch’s question of how they see the MAG PLC impacting their city staff. Mesa responded that the impact will be minimal. Phoenix did not respond since this was their first meeting. Brian Rose, Buckeye, said the town engineer reviews lighting plans in Buckeye and he thought it would be a minor increase in workload. Eugene Slechta, Fountain Hills, said he does not envision a significant impact. Kyle Mieras, Gilbert, said there would be some upfront additional workload but in the long term it would not matter. Maricopa County said their electrical engineer on staff can do the additional work and that it will not have a significant impact. Chris Luginbuhl said that some resources will be needed to make the new ordinance work, just as with any new ordinance.